

VZCZCXRO8913  
OO RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHLZ  
DE RUEHFT #2318 2471250  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 041250Z SEP 09  
FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1710  
INFO RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS FRANKFURT 002318

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [GM](#)

SUBJECT: SAARLAND ELECTION AFTERMATH: GREENS TAKING THE SLOW ROAD  
TO GOVERNMENT TO AVOID NATIONAL ELECTION CONTROVERSY

¶1. Summary: (SBU) Torn between the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) as prospective coalition partners, the Saarland Greens have chosen to postpone a decision until after the 27 September Bundestag elections. Instead they will conduct informal talks with all the parties before holding regional party meetings this month and a state party convention, probably on October 10, to decide with which party they want to begin formal coalition negotiations. Greens officials have told the Consulate that the national party supports waiting until October to keep their options open and avoid a decision that might split the party and hurt it in the Bundestag vote. Greens General Secretary Tressel acknowledged to the press that the national Greens party would like a leftist coalition with the SPD and the Left Party. He insisted, however, that the state party will decide and it is equally considering a coalition with incumbent Minister-President Peter Mueller's CDU and the centrist Free Democratic Party (FDP). Both sides have offered to make concessions to the Greens, but are considering just how much given that the Greens have just three seats in the 51-member parliament. END SUMMARY.

¶2. The Greens continue to say that the SPD is their preferred partner but that they have serious substantive disagreements with the Left Party on substance particularly the latter's support for coal mining. Perhaps even more important, however, are personal animosities between the Greens leaders, particularly state party chief Ulrich, and two of the Left Party members of parliament who once were Greens members. The August 30 Saarland state election put the Greens in the driver seat in determining the next government coalition; both the CDU and FDP, with 19 and 5 seats, respectively, and the SPD and Left Party, with 13 and 11 seats, respectively, are short of the 26 votes needed to elect a minister-president in Saarland. Both sides have quickly made gestures to the Greens. CDU's Mueller said publicly August 31 that he is ready to discuss removing university tuitions, a policy he had initiated, and to make other policy concessions such as increasing support for public transportation or considering a full ban on smoking in restaurants in order to clinch a deal with the Greens. On the left, SPD leader Maas is being relatively tight-lipped in public but is reportedly working behind-the-scenes to gain concessions from the Left Party.

¶3. While informal talks will continue to take place, little real progress is likely to come before the September 27 Bundestag vote. Greens officials have told the Consulate that the national party supports waiting until October to keep their options open and avoid a decision that might split the party and hurt it in the Bundestag vote. National party leaders clearly are leaning toward a red-red-green coalition, but one Hesse state-level official told the Consulate that Saarland is also considered a good place to attempt the "Jamaica" option of a CDU (black)-FDP (yellow)-Greens alliance because the Saar CDU and FDPs are both to the left of their federal parties. The parties have time to wait; under the Saar constitution the parliament has three months to pick a new government after it convenes on September 23. Either choice will be historic but both will be difficult for the Saar Greens, with its membership severely split between those who would find it odious to support the re-election of Mueller and those who just as vehemently distrust Left Party leader and former Saarland Minister-President Oskar

Lafontaine. Many see him as the man pulling the strings in a party that is a relic of old thinking on key issues such as energy, social policy, and child care.

ALFORD